

gibus nigris; cauda cyanea: subtus latissime ochracea ex toto fasciata; rostro nigro.

Hab. Java.

Müller described and named this species some years before Gmelin bestowed on it the appellation by which it has generally been known.

31. PITTA SCHWANERI.

Pitta schwaneri, Temm. Elliot, Mon. Pitt. pl. xxx.

Rufo-olivacea: capite nigro, vittis superciliaribus aureo-flavis; pectore lateribusque aureo-flavis, cæruleo-lineatis; cauda abdomineque azureis; rostro nigro.

Hab. Borneo.

+ 32. PITTA BOSCHI.

Pitta boschi, S. Müll. & Schleg. Verh. Nat. Gesch. Nederl. Ind. pl. 5; Elliot, Mon. Pitt. pl. xxxi.

Rufo-olivacea: vittis superciliaribus pectoralibusque flavo-aurantiacis; collari lato nigro; gula alba; abdomine et cauda cyaneis; rostro nigro.

Hab. Sumatra, Malacca.

XXX. *Critical Remarks on Dr. von Heuglin's 'Ornithologie Nordost-Afrika's.'* By R. B. SHARPE, F.L.S., Libr. Z.S., &c.

THE work on the ornithology of North-Eastern Africa, of which Dr. von Heuglin's many papers in the 'Journal für Ornithologie,' have been the precursors, has at length appeared*; and I take the present opportunity of offering to the readers of 'The Ibis' a few remarks on the thirteen *Lieferungen* now published, the last of which has only just reached this country. Many of the suggestions I shall have to make are due to Messrs. Gurney and Tristram, to whom I accordingly beg leave to tender my thanks. All ornithologists must gladly welcome Dr. von Heuglin's work as a very valuable addition to our knowledge of the avifauna of the Ethiopian region; and his long personal experience in North-Eastern Africa has given him the advantage

* [Vide antea, p. 127.—ED.]

of obtaining an insight into the habits of the birds, which lends an additional charm to his writings. These field-observations are perhaps the most original part of the book; for it is plain from internal evidence that the author had at his side proof-sheets of the recently published "Vögel Ost-Afrikas" of Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub, from which many of the scientific data have been derived. In future years the student might wonder at finding the "Vögel Ost-Afrikas," which has appeared in the present year 1870, quoted in various ornithological publications bearing the date 1869; and it is therefore well to state that this great work was more than a year in printing, and that the authors, with the utmost liberality, distributed proof-sheets to many of their friends; so that the book is often cited in my own "Monograph of the *Alcedinidæ*," Mr. Gray's "Hand-List of Birds," and the work now under notice, for some time before it was actually published. Dr. von Heuglin has largely availed himself of the privilege thus accorded to him, and there can be no doubt of the benefit which the scientific portion of his book has thereby received.

It is a matter of rejoicing that the present work, so far as it has proceeded, relieves Dr. von Heuglin from the stigma attaching to the authorship of the unsatisfactory "Systematische Uebersicht der Vögel Nord-Ost-Afrika's," published in the Reports of the Vienna Academy in 1856.

Dr. von Heuglin's present list of *Vulturidæ* should be collated with the remarks given by Mr. Blyth in his "Commentary on Dr. Jerdon's 'Birds of India'" (Ibis, 1866, pp. 232-234), a paper which seems hardly to have been sufficiently studied. Thus *Neophron ginginianus* is united to *N. percnopterus*, which consequently is said to range into India, whereas the Indian bird is now, I believe, generally admitted to be distinct, and bears the former name. Again, *Vultur nubicus* is referred to *V. auricularis*, a proceeding about which there still remains some doubt, though I would also remark that the *V. occipitalis* of Burchell is unquestionably the *V. chincoü* of Daudin (Tr. d'Orn. ii. p. 12), the latter name thus having a priority of more than twenty years.

I regard it as a mistake (p. 96) to cite *Falco babylonicus* as a

synonym, either of *F. lanarius* or of the race which does not seem to be specifically distinct from *F. lanarius*, but is called by Prof. Schlegel *F. lanarius græcus* (Mus. P.-B. *Falcones*, p. 15). *F. babylonicus* is a distinct race, nearer to *F. barbarus* than to *F. lanarius*, but decidedly larger than the former. To complete the synonymy of *F. sacer* (p. 27), the name *F. cherrug*, J. E. Gray, should be added. I believe the author is wrong in uniting (p. 36) the African *F. ruficollis* with the Indian *F. chicquera*, which, however closely allied it may be, certainly constitutes a distinct species; and the latter name unquestionably belongs to the Eastern bird, having been founded by Daudin on Levaillant’s “*Chicquera*” (Ois. d’Afr. pl. 30), which is expressly said to have been obtained in Bengal. It is on the other hand satisfactory that Dr. von Heuglin concurs (p. 38) in the opinion expressed by Mr. Selater in ‘The Ibis’ for 1861 (p. 346), that his *F. castanonotus* is the female of *F. semitorquatus* of Sir A. Smith; and the plate of the young male now given (tab. i.) shows that, as in most other birds, the immature of that sex resembles the adult female rather than the adult male. It is surely an error (p. 40) to refer, even with the expression of a doubt, the *F. desertorum* of Daudin (Tr. d’Orn. ii. p. 162), founded on the “*Rougri*” of Levaillant (Ois. d’Afr. pl. 17), to *F. vespertinus**. The beautiful *Tinnunculus alopec*, one of the most interesting of Dr. Heuglin’s discoveries, and long ago figured in this journal (*Ibis*, 1861, pl. iii.) is still wanting, so far as I know, in every museum in England. There is, however, at Leyden a specimen of this very distinct species of Kestrel. *Aquila vindhiana* and *A. punctata* can hardly with propriety be cited (p. 45) as synonyms of *A. rapax* (sc. *A. navioides*), as they belong to the closely allied but smaller and distinct Indian race. *A. fulvescens* may probably be a synonym of the larger race (the true *A. navioides*), which also occurs in North-Western India. In his account of *Astur palumbarius* (p. 59), Dr. von Heuglin states that it is found in Europe, with the exception of Iceland and Lapland—an assertion that is no doubt true with regard to the first-named of those northern lands, but quite erroneous so far as the last is concerned, since Wolley found it commonly breeding there, and

* Cf. *Ibis*, 1862, pp. 361–363.

even took a nest in lat. 70° N. nearly (Ooth. Woll. § 117). *Falco zonarius*, Temm. (Pl. Col. 374, 420) is referred to *Nisus unduliventer* (p. 67); but on this point Mr. Gurney's remarks (*antea*, p. 59) should be consulted. *N. hartlaubi* (p. 69) is quite distinct from *Accipiter minullus*, and considerably larger; the true West-African race of the latter being *A. erythropus*. The female of *A. minullus* is described as "*obsoletius tincta*;" but I may remark that in specimens from South-Eastern Africa there is no difference in colouring between the sexes when fully adult; Levaillant's plate represents an immature bird. Again (p. 70), Dr. von Heuglin unites three nearly allied but distinct species under the common name of *Nisus badius*. They are as follows:—

1. *Accipiter badius*=*A. dussumieri*.
2. *Accipiter sphenurus*=*A. brachydactylus*.
3. *Accipiter polyzonoides*.

I have never seen the true *A. badius* from any locality west of India; but it is represented in the West by three closely allied though distinct races, viz.:—in South-Eastern Europe and South-Western Asia by the somewhat larger species *A. brevipes*; in tropical Africa north of the equator by *A. sphenurus*, in which the males are of nearly the same size as those of *A. badius*, but the females are always smaller; in Africa south of the equator by *A. polyzonoides*, a still more distinct race than *A. sphenurus* and much less rufous on the under parts when adult. In Madagascar the same form, again somewhat varied, occurs in a fifth species, *A. madagascariensis*. The northern *Nisus niloticus* (Sundev.) is not recognized (p. 73) as distinct from the southern *N. gabar*; but Mr. Gurney thinks that they ought to be separated, and this view is corroborated by Mr. Blanford in his newly-published work (Geol. and Zool. Abyss. p. 292). In conclusion, it may be remarked that these birds, though referred by Dr. von Heuglin to the genus *Nisus*, are in fact small species of *Melierax**. He (p. 76) also unites the *Polyboroides* of Africa with that of Madagascar, which is apparently quite distinct (*cf.* Ibis, 1869, p. 451); and the identity of

* Mr. Layard (B. S. Afr. p. 30) mentions that *M. gabar* whistles "better than *M. musicus*."

Helotarsus ecaudatus and *H. leuconotus* does not yet seem to be satisfactorily established.

The utility of the golden rule, to regard only names published with descriptions, which English naturalists almost universally recognize, was never more clearly exemplified than when the present work is judged by its standard. The author accords priority to the names given—without any diagnosis of the species, in his own 'Systematische Uebersicht,' concerning which we fully agree with Mr. Blanford (Geol. and Zool. Abyss. p. 211), and to those of the 'Icones Ineditæ' of Prince Paul of Württemberg. It is for this reason that I cannot allow the synonym of *Circaetus fasciatus*, Heugl., published without description in the aforementioned list, to take precedence of *C. beaudouini*, published in due form by MM. J. Verreaux and Desmurs, in 'The Ibis' for 1862 (p. 212). He is further certainly in error (p. 86) when he associates with this species *C. fasciolatus*, Gray, from Natal, which is undoubtedly a distinct species, and the smallest of the genus, whereas *C. beaudouini* is one of the largest. He expresses a doubt as to the occurrence of the latter in West Africa; but there is a specimen from Bissao in the grand collection at Norwich. *C. fasciolatus* is also a perfectly distinct form, smaller than *C. zonurus*, to which, as well as to the previous species, the author doubtfully refers it. This last title, again, has no claim to priority (p. 86), and the species should stand as *C. cinerascens*, W. von Müller, whose labours in the cause of African ornithology have scarcely received the notice they deserve. Further particulars are desirable as to the specimen of *Buteo augur* from Southern Africa, stated in the present work to be in the Stuttgart Museum, as this is the only instance hitherto recorded of the occurrence of the species so far to the southward. Whether Dr. von Heuglin is correct (p. 93) in referring *B. auguralis*, Salvad., to *B. anceps*, A. Brehm*, is questionable. He does not appear to be aware that this species sometimes extends to West Africa. The Zoological Society had two living specimens from that locality, one of which is now in the British Museum. M. Verreaux has also, I believe, received it from the

* This species was described in the 'Naumannia,' for 1855, not 1854, as the reference has it.

Gold Coast. *Circus maurus* (p. 106) is a good South-African species, and quite distinct from the melanism of *C. cineraceus*, which occurs in Europe as well as in Africa, and was named by Vieillot *C. ater*.

Otus habessinicus (p. 107) is a rare bird, apparently, and is not represented in any English Museum. Mr. Gurney's interesting identification of *Bubo dilloni*, Des Murs and Prevost, with the South-African *B. capensis*, A. Smith (*cf.* Ibis, 1869, p. 462), must not be lost sight of, as it confirms the occurrence of this rare species in North-Eastern Africa—a fact the author seems inclined to doubt, though he has very properly accorded it a place in his work. The southern *B. verreauxi*, given (p. 112) as a synonym of the northern *B. lacteus*, is permanently distinguishable by its larger dimensions. *B. cinerascens* of the "Voyage en Abyssinie" (pl. 4) is made (p. 114) a synonym of *B. maculosus*; but this is apparently the true and very distinct *Huhua cinerascens*. The colour of the eye in the work just mentioned is wrongly given in the plate and right in the text.

Caprimulgus infuscatus and *C. isabellinus* are referred respectively to *C. nubicus*, Licht., and *C. agyptius*, Licht. (Verz. Doubl. p. 59); and these identifications, which appear to rest on good grounds, have been adopted by Mr. G. R. Gray in his "Hand-List." *C. inornatus*, Heugl., now really "published" for the first time, seems to be a good species, of which there were specimens in the Abyssinian collections of Messrs. Blanford and Jesse. The identification of *C. poliocephalus*, Heugl. (*nec* Rüpp.) with *C. tamaricis*, Tristr., (Ibis, 1866, pl. ii.) is interesting, as it extends the range of the latter species. The fact that the Berlin Museum contains, as is stated (p. 134) an example of *Scotornis longicauda* marked as coming from "Ost-Indien" is singular, and this very vague locality requires confirmation; for I am inclined to doubt the appearance of *Scotornis* away from the Ethiopian region, of which it may be regarded as a typical genus. The relegation of *Cosmetornis vexillaria* to the genus *Macrodipteryx* is one to which I cannot agree; for the former and *M. longipennis* should certainly be referred to separate and distinct genera. It is interesting to know that *Caprimulgus europæus* extends as far south-

ward as the Somali Coast in winter ; but with regard to Dr. von Heuglin’s note to the effect that it is doubtful whether *C. smithi*, Bp. (*C. europæus*, A. Smith), from South Africa is really distinct from the true *C. europæus*, I can state that no species could well be more distinct. Besides sundry differences in colour, the South-African bird wants altogether the white spots on the wings and tail so conspicuous in the male of the other.

The unusual quantity of manuscript names, freely enough interspersed throughout the book, but particularly in the *Caprimulgidae*, may well be complained of. Thus in the account of this family alone no fewer than seven such names, which we are careful not to repeat here, are introduced. Having referred to them elsewhere, the author should have been content to let them drop into the obscurity they merit. Nobody is really interested in them ; they can never possibly be adopted, and only tend to make worse the already sufficiently confused mass of Caprimulgine nomenclature ; besides, in the present instance, they reflect no credit on their proposer, and might have been most properly ignored.

We believe that the author is right in merging *Cypselus gutturalis* in *C. melba*, in contradiction of the opinion of Mr. Tristram (P. Z. S. 1867, p. 886). On comparing European examples with South-African, I find scarcely any difference. With the second species of *Cypselus* mentioned, Dr. von Heuglin has been guilty of an injustice in giving preference to his own name, *C. rueppelli*, printed in 1856, over the name *C. æquatorialis*, W. von Müll., published in 1851. He proposes to separate as a variety the eastern *C. caffer* under the name of *C. caffer orientalis*, on account of its smaller size and the less extent of white on the throat. From what I have seen of the variation of this latter character in the common *C. apus* I have been led to examine the question so far as I could ; and I can find no definite rule, specimens from South Africa varying considerably in the extent of white.

On the authority of a passage in Captain Grant’s ‘Walk across Africa,’ of a small black Swallow having been observed along with the beautiful white-headed species *Psalidoprocne*

albiceps, Selater (P.Z.S. 1864, pl. xiv.), the author includes the West-African *P. obscura*, with a mark of doubt, as likely to have been the bird observed. This, I think, he was scarcely justified in doing. If, as is possible, *Atticora griseopyga*, Sundev., is identical with *A. melbina*, Verr., from the Gaboon, this species of Swallow will be found to possess a very extended range. *Hirundo albigularis*, from North-eastern Africa (p. 163), is now generally understood and admitted to be distinct from the true *H. albigularis*, Strickl., from South Africa. This is indubitable; and the name *H. athiopica*, Blanford, is applied to the northern form. That *H. fuscicapilla* is a stage of plumage of *H. ruficeps*, Licht., which I am inclined to regard as an African form smaller than the true *H. filifera* from India, may be expected. The species from Africa is always much smaller, and never gains the size or fine plumage of the Indian bird. Dr. von Heuglin is surely wrong in admitting even for a moment *H. cucullata* on the authority of Lefebvre. A more untrustworthy authority than this "Voyage" can scarcely be found; and we should certainly not trust the authors of the ornithological part as the sole evidence for the occurrence in Abyssinia of a bird never before or since observed there. No doubt the strictly northern and closely allied species, *A. puella*, was mistaken for it. Again, I am not satisfied as to the distinctness of *Cotyle minor* from *C. paludicola*.

On the Kingfishers I have not much to say, except that there seems to be little doubt now that the true *Alcedo cristata*, Linn., seems to be the Madagascar species, and not the Continental form; and, again, *A. cyanocephala*, Shaw, if really an inhabitant of Abyssinia, of which Dr. von Heuglin is doubtful, and I am decidedly sceptical, must stand as *A. galerita*, W. von Müll., as it does in Mr. Gray's 'Hand-List' (p. 96). The author separates *A. cyanostigma* from *A. cristata*; but, as I have elsewhere demonstrated, it is only the young of the latter. Again, he does not seem to be aware of the separation of *Ispidina natalensis* from the West-African *I. picta* as set forth by myself (Ibis, 1869, p. 281, and Monogr. *Alced.* pt. vi.). Can the bird quoted by Dr. von Heuglin as the young male of *Ceryle maxima* be the newly described *C. sharpii*, Gould? The measurements adduced suggest the possibility of such an identification, as well

as the colour of the abdomen. *Dacelo fusca* is the name employed in the present work for the well-known *Halcyon smyrnensis*; but the latter specific name, published in 1766, takes precedence over Boddaert’s, published in 1783. It is decidedly wrong to unite the St. Jago Kingfisher, *H. erythrogastra*, to the Continental bird, *H. semicærulea*. If, as Dr. von Heuglin admits, the South-African *H. cyanoleuca* is distinct from *H. senegalensis*, he should not give the latter as an inhabitant of S. Africa. Then, again, why is *H. chelicuti*—the suggestion of an improved [?] reading is due to Drs. Hartlaub and Finsch (*cf.* Ibis, 1869, p. 278), to be written in the barbarous fashion proposed by the author, *D. tschelicutensis*? In the account of this Kingfisher may be noticed several irregularities in synonymy which will suggest themselves at once to the general reader. For instance, the quotation of “Daubeny” in Sir W. Jardine’s ‘Contributions’ for 1852—the author of the paper being Mr. Sclater. Again, by Dr. Hartlaub, myself and others, *Alcedo variegata*, Vieill., and *A. striolata*, Licht., are not positively considered identical with *H. damarensis*, Strickl., which is a perceptibly larger form. Dr. von Heuglin, following Dr. Finsch, unites *Merops superciliosus* with *M. ægyptius*; and in this he is most probably correct. *M. boleslavskii*, Von Pelz., is supposed to be the young of *M. bullocki*.

On the Sunbirds the author gives some very interesting notes. He lays great stress on the difference between *Nectarinia acik* and *N. senegalensis*, which I believe to be a good species. Beyond this I have no remarks to make on this group. Passing next to the *Certhiide*, I am certainly inclined to question the occurrence of *Tichodroma muraria* in Egypt. Though stated by Rüppell to be found in that country and in Abyssinia, Dr. von Heuglin never observed it in North-Eastern Africa at all.

We then come to the *Drymæcæ*; and as it is impossible without specimens to criticize the author’s species, I must pass them by, but I cannot help remarking that the difference in the number of rectrices does not appear to be of much value as a character; for I cannot admit that, taking *Cisticola schænicola* as the type of the genus, such birds as *Drymæca flaveola* and some others are generically identical. Dr. von Heuglin cannot be too

highly complimented on the very careful and elaborate descriptions he furnishes, thus rendering every assistance to the student of these difficult Warblers. *Hemipteryx habessinica*, Heugl., is probably the same as *Cisticola ayresi*, which is very doubtfully distinct from the common *C. schænicola*. It is rather a novel idea to find Cetti's Warbler placed in the genus *Bradypterus*; but I believe that Mr. Tristram, our first authority on the *Sylviidæ* in this country, considers this its proper position. The *Bradypteri*, along with *Phlexis*, *Potamodus*, and some others, form a very natural subdivision of the Warblers, and may all be classified under the genus *Bradypterus*, the subdivisions being marked by the subgenera, as above indicated.

The author does not admit the distinctness of *Aedon familiaris* or *A. minor* from the common *A. galactodes*; and in this he is no doubt right. *A. minor* is probably not a good species, and *A. familiaris* only a climatic form, the grey shades of plumage being produced by the nature of the climate in the limited district in which the race has yet been found. It is a pleasure to find that many of the warblers will be figured; and although Dr. von Heuglin is evidently very well acquainted with this group, every one will feel grateful for the additional assistance of the plates to help us to understand these very puzzling little birds. *Acrocephalus arabicus* is a new species from Arabia, allied to *A. stentorius*, with which the author (J. f. O. 1861, p. 194) has before identified it.

Dr. von Heuglin separates a *Sylvia melanocephala minor* from the true *S. melanocephala*. He does not seem to have much faith in it as a species; for he does not give it a number of its own, but he identifies it with *S. bowmani*, Tristr., which, however closely allied, is a very distinct species, and one which has possibly never fallen under the author's notice. Then, too, *S. deserticola*, Tristr., is not the same as *S. nana*. If, as appears from the book, Dr. von Heuglin considers *S. crassirostris* to be identical with *S. olivetorum*, he is certainly wrong; for the bill and tail of the former present excellent specific characters. I do not quite understand these birds being retained under *Sylvia* instead of *Hypolais*, which genus is surely as distinct from the true *Sylvia* as are *Dryodromas*, Finsch & Hartl., and *Tricholais*, Heugl., from *Eremomela*.

Mr. Hume has lately shown (*anteà*, p. 286) that the Abyssinian *Anthus sordidus* is quite distinct from the Indian species to which that name has been applied; and an examination of specimens in the collections made by Messrs. Blanford and Jesse prove him to be right.

Dr. von Heuglin records three forms of *Pratincola rubicola* as occurring in North-eastern Africa, which he calls respectively *P. rubicola*, *P. rubicola hemprichi*, and *P. rubicola sibylla*, with which is united *P. pastor*, of which last I should like to see specimens from Abyssinia. In my opinion he is wrong in uniting *P. sibylla*, which is from Madagascar, and has white flanks, with *P. pastor*, in which they are rufous, the latter being the South-African representative of *P. rubicola*. Again, *P. pastor* seems to be distinguished from the true *P. rubicola* by the greater amount of white on the rump, the more general purity of the colours, and has also the middle of the abdomen and under tail-coverts very pure white, these parts being tinged with rufous in *P. rubicola*. Considerable uncertainty exists as to what is really the true *Saxicola isabellina* of Rüppell. From the figure given in that naturalist’s “Atlas,” Mr. Tristram and some others are inclined to consider it only the female of some other species, perhaps *S. monacha*. That it is so seems likely; and an examination of the type is desirable; for in the case of this supposition proving correct, the species must bear the name of *S. saltatrix*, Ménétr. To *S. frenata*, Heugl., a species of which the description is here for the first time published, the author refers, with doubt, *S. leucorrhœa* (Gm.), which last, from Senegambia, I have every reason to consider nothing more than our *S. ænanthe* in full autumn plumage. A new species, *S. finschi*, is described from Egypt and Siberia, of the validity of which I am far from being convinced. Both Dr. von Heuglin and Dr. Jerdon (B. Ind. i. p. 131) seem to regard the rufous under tail-coverts as the character distinguishing *S. lugens* from *S. leucomela*; but it does not hold good, as birds of the same species with white and rufous under tail-coverts can be found, and the difference consists mainly in the larger size of the former, and possibly, could the matter be investigated by some competent observer, in a difference in habits. The author seems

to be right in considering *S. pallida*, Rüpp., to be the young of *S. monacha*. *S. modesta* is a new species described for the first time; but the name cannot stand, since it was conferred some months previously on another bird by Mr. Tristram (Ibis, 1869, p. 206), unless Dr. von Heuglin can show that he had complied with the recognized rules in his application of it—rules which require rather more publicity than that afforded by its display in a museum, even though that museum be at Leyden. Again, his *S. scotocerca* cannot be recognized, that species being *Ruticilla fusicaudata*, Blanford (Ann. & Mag. N. H. 1st Nov. 1869, p. 329).

The *Turdidæ* of Dr. von Heuglin's work call for little remark; but I rather doubt if a comparison of the true *Ixus nigricans*, from South Africa, with Abyssinian specimens, would confirm the identity of the two species.

As regards the twelfth and thirteenth parts, which have just been received, I must notice that the care bestowed by the author in the revision of the former parts falls rather short here; and there are several clerical errors, which seem to point to more hurried composition, and somewhat mar the appearance of the printing. Having drawn the attention of the author to this omission, which the care exhibited in the former portion of the work renders the more conspicuous, I may proceed to observe that in the family *Ampelidæ* are included *Campephaga* and *Ceblepyris*. It would be a great boon if some one would define the limits of this family, which seems in the eyes of several ornithologists to be a refuge for the destitute, wherein may be lodged any kind of aberrant form whose place cannot be readily assigned. Thus we find in the 'Vögel Ost-Afrikas' *Bradyornis* placed here by Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub. Now *Bradyornis* appears to me to be more of an aberrant Chat than anything else, having certain allies in those peculiar African species which cluster in the neighbourhood of the true *Saxicolinæ*, and form a tangled knot around that subfamily. *Campephaga* and *Ceblepyris* I also regard as aberrant Shrikes; but I wish to give no positive opinion on this subject, as it requires more careful study and much further consideration than my present opportunities have permitted. To *Ceblepyris pectoralis* must be added our new *Campephaga anderssoni* (P. Z. S. 1870, p. 69, pl. 4) from Damaraland,

which is the female of that species. It is curious to find the South-African *Ceblepyris cæsia* placed as an inhabitant of North-Eastern Africa; but the author assures us that there can be no doubt as to the identity of the specimen in Prince Paul of Württemberg's collection, on the authority of which the bird is included in the avifauna of North-eastern Africa. The *Muscicapa chocolatina* of Rüppell is now referred to the genus *Bradyornis*. Concerning this bird the latter author made the curious mistake of twice including it in his 'Systematische Uebersicht' (pp. 37 and 49), under the respective names of *Muscicapa chocolatina* and *Curruca chocolatina*! It is easy to imagine how the mistake came about; but it nevertheless proved a stumbling-block to ornithologists, who ought therefore to be not a little grateful for the elucidation of the error, especially as the identity of the species has been proved by an examination of the types. It is interesting to see that *M. semipartita*, Rüpp., is referred to *Cassinia*; but I am inclined to doubt its being strictly congeneric.

On the authority of a specimen obtained by Speke in Uniamuezi, *Terpsiphone mutata* is included in the present work. This, to say the least, is extraordinary; for although the coasts of Zanzibar and Mozambique exhibit certain Malagash affinities, I cannot at this moment recall another instance of a truly Malagash species occurring so far north as the above-mentioned locality. Dr. von Heuglin separates the North-eastern *Elminia* as distinct from the West-African *E. longicauda*, under the name of *E. longicauda minor*, which name he adopts in preference to his previously proposed name of *E. alexinæ*. With *Telephonus erythropterus* he includes the Algerian "Tschagra," which, however, may be a distinct species, peculiar to Algeria; but it will be curious, if its specific distinctness be proved beyond a doubt, to find an isolated form of the truly African genus *Telephonus* resident within the limits of the Palearctic region. I must demur to the insertion of *T. trivirgatus* in the present work, on the authority of a specimen in the Berlin Museum; for I believe it to be strictly a southern form. Again, on the same authority, I must question *T. longirostris* being an Abyssinian bird. I very much doubt if this species, which I

cannot understand Mr. Layard identifying with *T. erythropterus* (B. S. Afr. p. 161), ever occurs to the north of the tropic of Capricorn. It, as well as *T. remigialis*, Finsch & Hartl., of which I have specimens, is an excellent species, most nearly allied to *T. cucullatus* of Algeria. I do not for one moment believe in the numerous species or races of *Lanius auriculatus* enumerated by various authors. I have examined specimens of the so-called *L. rutilans* of Temminck, from the River Gambia, and consider them to be nothing more than the common species in winter plumage. It seems pretty certain that the bird possesses a winter dress; for remains of it are to be traced on nearly every specimen shot on its first return to Europe. In the same way, I believe that *L. niloticus*, *L. pectoralis*, *L. jardinii*, and the variety "*dorso toto atro*" are nothing more than *L. auriculatus* in various stages of plumage.

L. collurio migrates to South Africa, where it was said by Levaillant to breed—a statement reproduced by Dr. von Heuglin without any mark of doubt, but it is probably not more true than any other of Levaillant's stories. To return to *L. auriculatus*, it does not seem to extend its range beyond North-eastern Africa and the Gold Coast on the west (*fide* Hartlaub); and more evidence than the existence of a specimen in the Stuttgart Museum is required to prove that it ever reaches South Africa. In a recent paper read before the Zoological Society, I have, in company with Mr. Dresser, put together a few notes on the Grey Shrikes, so that only a short commentary is needful here. Were it not that Dr. von Heuglin expressly states that he himself obtained the *L. excubitor* in Egypt and Arabia Petraea, we should have been sceptical as to its ever occurring so far south; and it is to be hoped that he can refer to specimens to prove the fact. On the other hand, the bird mentioned by Mr. Tristram (Ibis, 1867, p. 364) turns out to be not *L. excubitor*, but *L. lahtora*. Dr. von Heuglin is quite right not to include *L. algeriensis* among the birds of North-eastern Africa, although Strickland recorded it from Kordofan. The species is, however, resident in Algeria; and probably the young *L. lahtora* (*L. fallax*, Finsch & Hartlaub), with the under parts greyish, was mistaken for it. On the authority of W. von Müller, who states that *L.*

meridionalis extends in North-eastern Africa as far southward as Sennaar, that species is accorded a place in the present work ; but the author reasonably doubts the truth of the statement, which I also regard as an error. For what is usually known to European naturalists as *L. dealbatus* (which name, by-the-by, ought always to have given way to *L. pallens* of Cassin), Dr. von Heuglin seeks to revive a name casually given by Hemprich and Ehrenberg to a bird which they supposed to be a hybrid Shrike, and called *L. leucopygus*. Were this name worthy of consideration (no description or attempt at a definition having been given), it would take precedence over Col. Sykes's name of *L. lahtora*, which Mr. Dresser and I have shown to be positively identical with *L. pallens* ; but the name cannot be admitted. The recently described *L. hemileucurus*, Finsch & Hartlaub, and *L. fallax* of the same authors, are nothing more than *L. lahtora* in the very old and young plumages ; and I have examples of both positively identical with Indian specimens. I agree with our author in questioning the occurrence, on Dr. A. E. Brehm's authority, of *L. smithi* in North-eastern Africa.

This closes my remarks for the present on this very interesting work ; but I cannot conclude without calling special attention to two points which demand particular notice. These are, first, the very elaborate Latin diagnoses given to all the species ; and, secondly, the very carefully executed plates. In his choice of subjects, Dr. von Heuglin has made a judicious selection of rare and unfigured birds ; and no one requires to be told what an assistance a plate is in determining species. In his attitudes, he shows himself to be well acquainted with the habits of birds, while the evident care bestowed on the execution of the plates cannot be too highly commended.

XXXI.—Letters, Announcements, &c.

We have received the following letters addressed "To the Editor of 'The Ibis'":—

February 2nd, 1870.

SIR,—A small collection of birds, kindly presented to my museum by Mr. Valentine Irwin, who collected them in Tip-